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SUBJECT: LETTER FROM PRESIDENT O. OBASANJO TO PRESIDENT  
G.W. BUSH

1. Following is the text of a letter from President Olusegun Obasanjo to President George W. Bush. Original will be sent by pouch.

2. Begin text.

PRES/15

His Excellency,  
President George W. Bush,  
The White House,  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave,  
Washington, DC 20502,  
USA.

Dear President

RE: PAN AFRICAN HEALTH FOUNDATION

It is with great pleasure that I am writing to introduce you to the Pan African Health Foundation (PAHF). This new international non-profit (501 (c) 3) initiative will address the large and growing burden of infectious diseases in Africa in a new and lasting way. It is currently supported by my government, the Nigerian and U.S. private sector and other foreign companies operating in Nigeria. I would be very honoured if the US government decides to participate in this critical project as well. I have outlined below, for your consideration, information about PAHF and its relevance to the growing burden of disease in Africa.

One of humanity's most pressing issues is how not only to reduce Africa's disease burden, but also how to stop it from worsening. Infectious diseases are the leading cause of death in Africa. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that 10.5 million children in poor nations died before the age of five in 2002. The majority of these deaths were caused by preventable or treatable infectious diseases, including 1.9 million from respiratory infections, (including Tuberculosis (TB), and 1.1 million from Malaria. Additionally, HIV/AIDS takes the lives of 14,000 people every day, including 2,000 children and this pandemic is growing.

The human suffering due to these diseases is devastating. The economic impact of this burden is less well known, but is also staggering: for example, the WHO estimates that Africa's GDP would be US\$12 billion greater each year if malaria were eradicated. In addition to decreasing productivity, disease tears at the fabric of society by straining families - millions of children are orphaned each year, and millions of parents lose their children to disease. As you have often indicated, without strong families, social well-being and political stability are compromised. The above facts also convey a crucial message - sustainable development is feasible in Africa only if Africa tames the infectious diseases that are disempowering its people.

A major factor in the spread of disease throughout Africa is that essential medical supplies to prevent or treat these infectious diseases are often unavailable or unaffordable. The traditional international aid approach has been to donate these supplies in times of crisis. While this approach provides temporary solutions, it falls short of the ideal situation in which African countries become self-sufficient.

PAHF's approach moves toward this ideal by developing self-sustaining solutions to Africa's high level of infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. To achieve this goal, PAHF will support the construction of production facilities for essential medical supplies within Africa. Each factory will be operated by a local not-for-profit group to create African ownership. PAHF is also working with international leaders in the for profit, not-for-profit and government sectors to develop and ensure best standards and practices in order to guarantee that the factories are managed and operated in line with international best practices. Furthermore, we will work with all parties to ensure that the products safely reach their targeted end-users.

PAHF will provide the funding for factory construction and initial operating capital. Each factory will then operate on a not-for-profit, self-sustaining basis, with all revenues

from product sales re-invested into the factory to guarantee continuous operation. With no obligations to repay loans or provide profits to shareholders, PAHF sponsored factories will be able to sell their products well below market prices.

Thus, PAHF's approach decreases our dependency on the international aid community by building local production capacity, enabling critical technology transfers, creating vital jobs and building self-sufficiency. I strongly believe that the PAHF initiative offers us a unique and immediate opportunity to demonstrate concretely, the New Partnership for African Development's (NEPAD) goals and objectives, including moving towards African solutions to African problems.

PAHF is targeting essential and proven effective medical technologies as identified by the WHO such as Auto Disable (AD) Syringes and Insecticide-Treated Mosquito Nets (ITNs). Not only are these supplies critical in reducing the spread of infectious disease but they also have simple manufacturing processes and are made from raw materials available in Africa.

PAHF's first project will be an AD syringe factory in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. AD syringes are critical because injections are the most common medical procedure, numbering 16 billion each year. The WHO estimates that nearly half of all syringes are re-used in Africa, causing 1.3 million early deaths and leading to US\$ 535 million in direct medical costs. In Nigeria, it is estimated that 10% of all new HIV/AIDS infections are caused from blood sources, including unsafe injections. AD syringes prevent the dangerous re-use of syringes by ensuring that each syringe can be used only once.

The Port Harcourt syringe factory will produce 135 million syringes each year, providing safe injections and immunisations for our children. In the words of the Hon. Dr. Louis Sullivan, former Secretary of Health and Human Services and a Board Member of the Pan African Health Foundation, this factory will help ensure that "parents will no longer be faced with the fear that their children will become ill because of an immunisation that was meant to protect them". Additionally, this project, through job creation and a demonstrated commitment to the local population, will help increase stability in this oil-producing region and bring significant lasting benefits to the people of Port Harcourt and Nigeria as a whole.

As you know, due to Nigeria's limited budget for public spending, we directly support very few not-for-profit organizations. However, PAHF's approach differs greatly from traditional charity work and is very much in line with our own development objectives. We also believe that PAHF will bring large and lasting benefits to the Port Harcourt community, and Nigeria as a whole. We are, therefore, supporting PAHF with a donation of 200,000.000 Naira (approximately US\$1.5 million). Additionally, the Rivers State has generously donated four hectares of land for the project. It is our hope that this project can usher in a new standard for development assistance.

It is my great hope that your government will consider joining us in this important initiative. I hope you will consider dedicating funds from your Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief for this project. Your government's support, either directly, or on a matching funds basis, will greatly expedite PAHF's ability to raise the US\$20 million necessary for the AD syringe project. Additionally, given that PAHF is a public-private partnership, we would also greatly appreciate if you could use your good offices to encourage the private sector to participate. The sooner this project is built, the sooner our children can expect safe injections.

Thank you, while I look forward to receiving your response on your potential involvement in this project.

Yours sincerely  
/signature/  
Olusegun Obasanjo

End text.

CAMPBELL